

Appl. No. : 10/675,595
Filed : September 30, 2003

REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, Claims 1-16, 18 and 20-33 remain pending. Claims 17, 19 and 34-46 have been canceled without prejudice to their further prosecution in a continuation application.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's statements that Claims 17 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of Claim 17, as well as amended Claim 18 to include the recitations of Claim 19. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claims 1 and 18 are now in condition for immediate allowance. Additionally, Claims 2-16 depend from amended Claim 1 and are likewise in condition for immediate allowance, not only because they depend from an allowable base claim, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested in the cited art. Similarly, Claims 20-33 depend from amended Claim 18 and are likewise in condition for immediate allowance, not only because they depend from an allowable base claim, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested in the cited art.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶2 as being indefinite. The Examiner states that "the first and second resilient members" in line 2 of Claim 15 lack antecedent basis. Applicants have amended Claim 15 to provide antecedent basis for this phrase and therefore respectfully request that the rejection of these claims be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims Under Double Patenting

Claims 1, 5-9, 13-14, 18, 21-26, and 30-33 stand rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting over Claim 24 of U.S. 6,789,605. Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot in view of Applicants' amendments to Claims 1 and 18 to incorporate the recitations of Claims 17 and 19, respectively, which the Examiner indicated makes amended Claims 1 and 18 allowable.

Claims 2-3, 12, 15-16, 20, 34-39 and 43 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claim 24 of US 6,789,605. Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot in view of Applicants'

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amendments to Claims 1 and 18 to incorporate the recitations of Claims 17 and 19, respectively, which the Examiner indicated makes amended Claims 1 and 18 allowable.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-16, 18 and 20-46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kozacka et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,881,799) in view of Hagar et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,673,026). Applicants have amended Claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of canceled Claim 17, amended Claim 18 to incorporate the recitations of canceled Claim 19 and canceled Claims 34-46.

In view of the Examiner's statement that Claims 17 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, which Applicants have achieved by amending Claims 1 and 18 to incorporate the recitations of Claims 17 and 19, respectively, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claims 1 and 18 are in condition for immediate allowance. Additionally, Claims 2-16 depend from amended Claim 1 and are likewise in condition for immediate allowance, not only because they depend from an allowable base claim, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested in the cited art. Similarly, Claims 20-33 depend from amended Claim 18 and are likewise in condition for immediate allowance, not only because they depend from an allowable base claim, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested in the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance in view of the above remarks.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

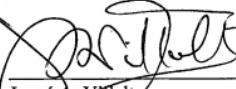
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Respectfully submitted,

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